World war ii

World War II was a monumental and significant event in the world history. The United States was catalytically drawn in it after Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japan. In order to make the whole nation get involved in the war, there is need to use influence; propaganda. Like the warfare between the U. S. and Japan that involved instilling in people a strong nationalistic pride. This was especially achieved with the use of books, film, newspapers and radio. By the virtue of their medium, radio and film were the best means of reaching a wider audience. The U. S. then used the media to stir up common sense under which it could unite its populace. Potent words were used that reinforced a sense of duty and instilled a vengeful spirit both in those fighting in the battlefield and those supporting them on the home front (Navarro). This paper will discuss the issue of Hollywood and entertainment during the World War II.

Entertainment and Hollywood Home Front Mobilization

During World War II, Roosevelt and his government decided to capitalize on Hollywood and film production to capture its wider audience outreach. The American culture was by then full of idolized movie stars and Hollywood propaganda was best at that time and thus was widely used for mobilization efforts. Entertainment and Hollywood movies became integral part in the home front. Many Hollywood stars became engaged in publicity tours across the country to promote scrap drives or sell war bonds. The Hollywood celebrities provided the best salesmanship for the home front war efforts (Teacher Oz's Kingdom of History). A sense of duty became the selling point and the Hollywood celebrities appeared in bond rallies across the country dubbed " Starts over America" (Smithsonian Institution).

The War and Hollywood's Contribution through Entertainment

When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the world plunged into WWII. However, the United States did not get involved in the war until 1941 and as the war progressed, more and more people (both men and women) left their jobs to join the front ranks. Puscheck cites that as the need for women grew, the U. S. government began a propaganda campaign in support of the war (p. 2). The role of radio and Hollywood cannot be underscored during this period as they were the best way to reach American citizens during the war era. The propaganda produced in movies and otherradio programs helped to encourage Americans to support the war (p. 3-4). President Roosevelt and his government had realized about the nation's suspicions of propaganda and they strove to merge patriotic duty with entertainment. Some of the mediums used by the government were radio and movies using the new form of popular culture by then.

According to Puscheck, radio was a major source of news in the twentieth century but with the advent of the movie industry, it gained a lot of popularity. Popularity of movies increased during the early 1930s and by the time WWII began, the movies were exhilarating forms of entertainment. This was a valuable tool used by the U. S. government in its propaganda efforts to advance its war effort messages. In order to enhance the public's understanding, the office of war information produced posters for the war effort especially in film. The office of the war information produced a developed list of questions that producers were to ask themselves when creating film. Some of the questions included whether the film will contribute to the war effort, how the film will portray America and its war and on the

home front. The WWII films thus included more blatant propaganda that pushed propaganda stories and dialogues. Some of these propaganda films, Frank Capra's Why We Fight, discussed Nazi's evils and the need for the American people to work together. Others films like Since You Went Away had war themes in them and goals of a free country (p. 13-145).

Hollywood was obviously sympathetic to the allied cause and they adapted standard plots and serials. Others films like Since You Went Away had war themes in them and goals of a free country (Pusheck, p. 13-145). Films featured Nazis as the gangster villains and Japans as bestial who were incapable of reasoning or human qualities. This meant that Hollywood lost its access to foreign markets but it was able to use Germans, Japanese or the Italians as villains without any diplomatic protests. Some leading Hollywood names like Walter Pidgeon travelled to the Michigan aircraft plant to make a promotional film that encouraged the sale of war bonds. Women were the majority workers as many men had joined the battle. One of them, Rose Will Monroe, who was a riveter and had been involved in construction of B-24 and B-29 bombers, was recruited to appear in Pidgeon's film (History. com). Puscheck says that movies were very effective source of propaganda mainly because it wass during the war that the film industry exploded (p. 25). This is because movies especially targeted young people who had the possibility of socializing while at the same time participating in government propaganda. Most of the films tended to depict the life on the home front during WWII and the way of life for many young Americans. One such movie was The Human Comedy which had a story centered on a man called Homer and his family (his big brother, mother, sister and younger brother). This film like many

others produced during the war hinted to the viewers about what their obligations are to their country (p. 25).

The radio also played its part. Radio soaps had been very popular by WWII; the government used them as a propaganda medium. The government had quiet an advantage in its propaganda message through the radio as the soap programs would have assisted to develop a loyal base of listeners. During the day, several war themes were addressed and like in the movie industry there were many guidelines for soap opera writers to follow, and all soaps were now written and edited by the office of war information (Puscheck, p. 16).

Posters were also used as a source of the propaganda due to the ability to place them all over the town; on the fences, windows and at the walls of public buildings so that all people were able to view them. The posters advertised war jobs and younger generation of women especially those out of school or college were the main target of the government's propaganda messages because many had far less obligations. One of the popular posters targeting women was titled, " Longing Won't Bring Him Back Sooner... Get a War Job!," (Puscheck, p. 18). This poster simply meant that women should pass time away from their men with a war job.

Conclusion

The propaganda used during WWII was not only used for entertainment purposes but had the message that was used to encourage the people to stand behind the nation's entry into war. The nation thus needed more men to be at the battlefront. Radio programs, films and posters were mainly used

to spread propaganda. Hollywood films were very popular by then and they depicted the war and in many ways encouraging people to be part of it. They encouraged, promoted and informed the people about the nation's war goals. The U. S. then used the media to stir up common sense under which it could unite its populace.